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REV. DR. TALMAGE PICTURES LIFE BE-
YOND THE GRAVE.

Martyrdom of Stephen the Theme For
an Able Sermon—Glimpses of Heaven
Through the Eyes of the Great Preach-
er—The Eternal Sleep.

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ciation.

WASHINGTON, March 13.—The dis-
course of Dr. Talmage which we send
out is a vivid story of martyrdom and a
rapturous view of the world to come;
text, Acts vii, 55-60, "Behold I see the
heavens opened," &c.

Stephen had been preaching a rousing
sermon, and the people could not stand
it. They resolved to do as men some-
times would like to do in this day, if
they dared, with some plain preacher of
righteousness—kill him. The only way
to silence this man was to knock the
breath out of him. So they rushed
Stephen out of the gates of the city, and
with curse and whoop and yell they
brought him to the cliff, as was the cus-
tom when they wanted to take away life
by stoning. Having brought him to the
edge of the cliff, they pushed him off.

After he had fallen they came and look-
ed down, and seeing that he was not yet
dead they began to drop stones upon
him, stone after stone. Amid this hor-
rible rain of missiles Stephen clung
with his knees and folds his hands,
while the blood drips from his temples
to his cheeks, from his cheeks to his
garments, from his garments to the
ground, and then, looking up, he makes
two prayers—one for himself and one
for his murderers. "Lord Jesus, receive
my spirit," that was for himself.

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,"
that was for his assailants. And all
pain and loss of blood he swooned away
and fell asleep.

The Martyr's Vision.
I want to show you today five pic-
tures—Stephen gazing into heaven,
Stephen looking at Christ, Stephen
stoned, Stephen in his dying prayer
and Stephen asleep.

First look at Stephen gazing into
heaven. Before you take a leap you
want to know where you are going to
land. Before you climb a ladder you
want to know to what point the ladder
reaches. And it was right that Stephen,
within a few moments of heaven, should
be gazing into it. We would all do well
to be found in the same posture. There
is enough in heaven to keep us gazing.
A man of large wealth may have stat-
ues in the hall and paintings in the
sitting room and works of art in all
parts of the house, but he has the chief
pictures in the art gallery, and there
hour after hour you walk with cata-
logue and glass and ever increasing ad-
miration. Well, heaven is the gallery
where God has gathered the chief treas-
ures of his realm. The whole universe
is his palace. In this lower room where
we stop there are many adornments, tes-
sellated floor of amethyst, and on the
winding cloud stairs are stretched
canvases on which compassing azure and
purple and saffron and gold. But heav-
en is the gallery in which the chief
glories are gathered. There are the bright-
est robes. There are the richest crowns.
There are the highest exaltations.
John says of it, "The kings of the earth
shall bring their honor and glory into
it." And I see the procession forming,
and in the line come all empires, and
the stars spring up into an arch for
the hosts to march under. The hosts
step to the sound of music, and the
pitch of the avalanche from the mountains,
and the flag they bear is the flame of a
consuming world, and all heaven turns
out with harps and trumpets and myriad
voiced acclamation of angelic dominion
to welcome them in, and so the kings of
the earth bring their honor and glory
into it. Do you wonder that good peo-
ple often stand, like Stephen, looking
into heaven? We have many friends
there.

Friends in Heaven.
There is not a man in this house to-
day so isolated in life but there is some
one in heaven with whom he once shook
hands. As a man gets older the number
of his celestial acquaintances very rapidly
multiplies. We have not had one
glimpse of them since the night we
kissed them goodby, and they went
away, but still we stand gazing at
heaven. As when some of our friends
go across the sea, we stand on the dock
or on the steam car and watch them,
and after awhile the bulk of the vessel
disappears, and then there is only a
patch of sail on the sky, and soon that
is gone, and they are all out of sight,
and yet we stand looking in the same
direction, so when our friends go away
from us into the future world we keep
looking down through the Narrows, and
gazing and gazing, as though we ex-
pected that they would come out and
stand on some cloud and give us one
glimpse of their blissful and transfigured
faces.

While you long to join their com-
panionship and the years and the days
go with such tedious that they break
your heart, and the viper of pain and
sorrow and bereavement keeps gnawing
at your vitals, you stand still, like
Stephen, gazing into heaven. You won-
der if they have changed since you saw
them last. You wonder if they would
recognize your face now, so changed
it is by their trouble. You wonder if
amid the myriad delights they have
they care as much for you as they used
to when they gave you a helping hand
and put their shoulder under your bur-
den. You wonder if they look any older,
and sometimes in the evening tide, when
the house is all quiet, you wonder if
you should call them by their first name
if they would not answer, and perhaps
sometimes you do make the experiment,
and when you hear but God and yourself
are there you distinctly call their names
and listen and sit gazing into heaven.

Seeing Christ.
Pass on now and see Stephen looking
upon Christ. My text says he saw the
Son of Man at the right hand of God.
Just how Christ looked in this world,
just how he looks in heaven, we cannot
say. A writer in the time of Christ
says, describing the Saviour's personal
appearance, that he had blue eyes and
light complexion, and a very graceful
structure, but I suppose it was all guess-
work. The painters of the different ages
have tried to imagine the features of
Christ and put them upon canvases, but
they have not waited until with our
own eyes we see him and with our own
ears we can hear him. And yet there is
a way of seeing and hearing him now.
I have to tell the door of this case

see and hear Christ on earth you will
never see and hear him in heaven. Look
There he is! Behold the Lamb of God!
Can you not see him? Then pray to God
to take the scales off your eyes. Look
that way—try to look that way. His
voice comes down to you this day—
comes down to the blindfold, to the deaf-
est soul, saying, "Look unto me, all ye
ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I
am God, and there is none else." Pro-
clamation of universal emancipation for
all slaves! Prolamation of universal
salvation for all rebels! Behold the
Babylonian nobles to his table! George
I entertained the lords of England
at a banquet; Napoleon III wel-
comed the czar of Russia and the sultan
of Turkey to his feast; the emperor of
Germany was glad to have our minis-
ter, George Bancroft, sit down with him
at his table, but tell me, ye who know
most of the world's history, what other
king ever asked the abashed and the
forlorn and the wretched and the out-
cast to come and sit beside him?

Oh, wonderful invitation! You can
take it today and stand at the head of
the darkest army in any city and say:
"Come! Clothe for your rags, save for
your sores, a throne for your eternal
reigning." A Christ that talks like that
and acts like that and pardons like that
—do you wonder that Stephen stood
looking at him? I hope to stand eternally
doing the same thing. I must see him.
I must look upon that face once clouded
with my sin, but now radiant with my
pardon. I want to touch that hand that
knocked off my shackles. I want to hear
that voice which pronounced my deliv-
rance. Behold him, little children, for
if you live to threescore years and ten
you will see none so fair. Behold him,
ye aged ones, for he only can shine
through the dimness of your failing
eyesight. Behold him, earth, behold
him, heaven. What a moment when all
pains and loss of blood he swooned away
and fell asleep.

I pass on now and look at Stephen
stoned. The world has always wanted
to get rid of good men. Their very life
is an insult upon wickedness. Out with
Stephen through the gates of the city.
Down with him over the precipice.
Let every man come up and drop a
stone upon his head. But these men did
not so much kill Stephen as they killed
themselves. Every stone rebounded
upon them. While these murderers
were transfixed by the scorn of all good
men, Stephen lives in the admiration
of all Christendom. Stephen stood, but
Stephen lives. So all good men must be
killed. All who will live godly
must be killed. It is a law of God that
every body likes him. Show me any one
who is doing all his duty to state or church,
and I will show you men who utterly
abhor him.

If all men speak well of you, it is be-
cause you are either a laggard or a dolt.
If a steamer makes rapid progress
through the waves, the water will boil
and foam all around it. Brave soldiers
of Jesus Christ will hear the turbines
click. When I see a man with voice and
money and influence all on the right
side, and some caricature him, and some
sneer at him, and some denounce him,
and men who pretend to be actuated by
right motives conspire to cripple him,
to cast him out, to destroy him, I say,
"Stephen stood."

When I see a man in some great moral
or religious reform battling against
gigoloths, exposing wickedness in high
places, by active means trying to puri-
fy the church and better the world's es-
tate, and I find that and some of the news-
paper matronize him, and men,
even good men, oppose him and de-
nounce him, because, though he does
good, he does not do it in their way,
I say, "Stephen stood." The world, with
infinite spite, took after John Frederick
Oberlin and Paul and Stephen of the
text. But you notice, my friends, that
while they assailed him they did not
succeed really in killing him. You may
assault a good man, but you cannot kill
him.

The Way to the City.
On the day of his death Stephen spoke
before a few people in the synagogue;
now he addresses all Christendom. Paul
the apostle stood on Mars hill address-
ing a handful of philosophers who knew
not so much about science as a modern
schoolboy. Today he talks to all the
millions of Christendom alike to the
dreaders of justice and the glorifiers
of the mob to whom he preached, and
they threw bricks at him, and they
denounced him, and they jostled him,
and they spat upon him, and yet today,
in all lands, he is admitted to be the
great father of Methodism. Booth's bul-
let vacated the presidential chair, but
from that spot of conflagrated blood on
the floor in the box of Ford's theater
there sprang up the new life of a nation.
Stephen stood, but Stephen lives.

Pass on now and see Stephen in his
dying prayer. His first thought was not
how the stones hurt his head nor what
would become of his body. His first
thought was about his spirit. "Lord
Jesus, receive my spirit." The murder-
er standing on the trapdoor, the black
cap being drawn over his head before
the execution, may grumble about the
confessing some anxiety about where
he are going to come. You are not
I see it gleam from your eyes, and I see
it irradiating your countenance. Some-
times I can almost see an audience,
not because I come under their physical
eyesight, but because I realize the truth
that stand before so many immortal
souls. After it has got beyond the light
of our sun will there be torches lighted
for it the rest of the way? Will the
soul have to travel through long deserts
before it reaches the good land? If we
should lose our pathway, will there be
a castle at whose gate we may ask the
way to the city? Oh, this mysterious
spirit within us! It has two wings, but
it is in a cage now. It is locked fast to
keep it, but let the door of this case

open the least and that soul is off.
Eagle's wing could not catch it. The
lightnings are not swift enough to take
up with it. When the soul leaves the
body, it takes 50 worlds at a bound.
And have I no anxiety about it? Have
you no anxiety about it?

Stephen's Prayer.
I do not care what you do with my
body when my soul is gone, or whether
you believe in cremation or inhumation.
I shall sleep just as well in the
wrapping of sackcloth as in satin lined
with eagle's down. But my soul—where
this day passes I will find out where it
will land. Thank God for the intima-
tion of my text, that when we die Jesus
takes us. That answers all questions for
me. What though there were massive
bars between here and the city of light,
Jesus could remove them. What though
there were great Saharas of darkness,
Jesus could illumine them. What though
I get weary on the way, Jesus could
lift me on his omnipotent shoulder.
What though there were chasms to
cross, his hand could transport me. Then
let Stephen's prayer be my dying
prayer. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

It may be in that hour we will be too
feeble to say a long prayer. It may be
in that hour we will not be able to say
the Lord's Prayer, for it has seven peti-
tions. Perhaps we may be too feeble
even to say the infant prayer our moth-
ers taught us, which John Quincy Ad-
ams, 70 years of age, said every night
when he lay on his head upon his pillow:
Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

We may be too feeble to employ ef-
fect of these familiar forms, but this
prayer of Stephen is so short, is so con-
cise, is so earnest, is so comprehensive,
we surely will be able to say that—
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Oh, if
that prayer is answered, how soon will
it be to die! In this world is clever
than in the next. Perhaps it has treated us
a great deal better than we deserve to
be treated, but if on the dying pillow
there should break the light of that bet-
ter world we shall have no more regret
about leaving a small, dark, damp
house for one large, beautiful and cap-
acious. That dying minister in Philadel-
phia, some years ago, beautifully de-
scribed it when in the last moment he
picted it when he said and cried out, "I
move into the light."

A Working Christian.
Pass on now, and I will show you one
more picture, and that is Stephen
asleep. With a pathos and simplicity
peculiar to the Scriptures the text says
of Stephen, "He fell asleep." "Oh,"
you say, "what a place that was to sleep!"
A hard rock under him, stones falling
down upon him, the blood streaming
from his wounds, the mob howling. What
a place it was to sleep! And yet my text
takes that symbol of slumber to describe his
departure, so sweet was it, so contented
was it, so peaceful was it. Stephen had
lived a very laborious life. His chief
work had been to care for the poor.
How many leaves of bread he distributed,
how many bare feet he had washed,
how many cots of sickness and dis-
tress he blessed with ministrations of
kindness and love, I do not know, but
from the way he lived, and the way he
preached, and the way he died I know
he was a laborious Christian. But he
lived a very laborious life. His chief
work had been to care for the poor.
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tress he blessed with ministrations of
kindness and love, I do not know, but
from the way he lived, and the way he
preached, and the way he died I know
he was a laborious Christian. But he
lived a very laborious life. His chief
work had been to care for the poor.
How many leaves of bread he distributed,
how many bare feet he had washed,
how many cots of sickness and dis-
tress he blessed with ministrations of
kindness and love, I do not know, but
from the way he lived, and the way he
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